

my amendment. I offered it along with DON NICKLES and others to spread the minimum wage increase over 3 years and to provide small business and individuals with the kind of tax relief almost everyone agreed we should do.

This is the least we can do for the taxpayers, as I see it, following both a vote of the marriage tax penalty and the death. This will not, as assumed by the administration, cause irreparable damage to the economy. The Secretary of the Treasury came all the way over here to have a press conference because they were terribly concerned about this 90 percent to debt service and 10 percent to finish our work idea—the 90-10 button that is being worn around here. I don't understand how it will cause any kind of damage.

How quickly we forget the words of the Federal Reserve Chairman, who said the first thing we should do with a budget surplus is retire the debt. I can only conclude that the democratic roadblock to this very simple proposition must be, first, they do not want to provide tax cuts when taxes are at the highest level percentage of the American economy since the Second World War; second, they do not want to apply the surplus to debt reduction.

They must have a very large bushel of expenditures they want to make at the end of the year that exceed the \$28 billion, which is the residue of the 90-10 that will be around for tax cuts, for add-ons to appropriations, and for those extreme needs we have in the Medicare area with reference to nursing homes, HMO plus, and the like. Those will fit within the \$28 billion because we are speaking of outlays—I hope everybody understands that—in the year 2001.

Maybe this should not come as a surprise to anyone. The President of the United States has put forward an expansive and expensive set of budget proposals, a budget plan that even the Washington Post called a "lopsided budget." The Financial Times article called it "a masterpiece of central government planning."

Maybe these are the real reasons why my friends across the aisle cannot grasp the simple consent: 90 percent of the total surplus going to retiring the debt, and 10 percent being available to finish our work on appropriations, on the other expenditures, and some tax proposals that should clear.

I am prepared to talk to this issue with anyone, anywhere, and to produce the numbers. This is very close to what will happen if we take it right, watch our step, do what is needed, but not extravagantly spend money. If we try some very simple but needed tax cuts, which should challenge even this President in terms of his veto pen—and obviously we are all aware of fixing some Medicare needs, whether they are nursing homes that need some additional response from the Federal Government, whether it be the HMO plus, whether it be the home care, whether it be rural hospitals. Essentially, in the first year

they do not cost that much money. They do a considerable amount over 5, but actually we believe they will fit within this \$28 billion. That is the 10 percent of the 90-10 formula.

I hope everybody will take a look at it. I think it is a good way to go.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SPECTER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL THOMAS J. LEE

Mr. THURMOND. Madam President, I rise today to recognize the dedicated efforts and valuable contributions of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas ("Tom") Lee of the National Guard Bureau Counterdrug Directorate.

There are few more insidious domestic challenges to the safety, welfare, and security of the United States than illegal narcotics. Point to any border region of our nation and you will find criminal organizations smuggling every drug imaginable into America. Beyond being a highly addictive and destructive substance, drugs bring crime into every community through which they pass. Stemming the tide of illegal narcotics into the United States must always be a priority of the leaders of our nation.

For a number of years, the National Guard has played a critical and significant role in battling the drug trade in America through a variety of efforts. Whether it has been flying air support, providing translators, operating x-ray machines, doing youth outreach, or any of the seemingly endless other operations they participate in, the soldiers and airmen of the National Guard have been aggressively involved in supporting the counterdrug operations of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies throughout the United States.

Though commissioned in the Field Artillery when he graduated from college, LTC Lee has significant experience in counterdrug operations. Over the past three-years, he has served as the Special Projects Officer in the Counterdrug Directorate, where he has worked closely with Members of Congress and their staffs on how the National Guard can help stop drug trafficking. As he has done in all his previous assignments, LTC Lee distinguished himself as an individual of selflessness who possesses a strong sense of service and an unflagging dedication to executing his duties to the best of his abilities.

LTC Lee not only demonstrated an intimate knowledge of National Guard Counterdrug policy and operations, but

of the broader efforts of federal and state governments. He always provided clear, concise, and timely information and he has been a true asset to the Guard and to the nation's counterdrug operations.

I am confident that I speak for all my colleagues when I say that we are grateful and appreciative for the hard work of Lieutenant Colonel Lee during his tenure at the National Guard Bureau Counterdrug Directorate. He is a credit to the National Guard and he can be proud of both the record of accomplishment he has created and the high regard in which he is held. We wish him the best of luck in his new assignment and continued success in the years to come.

IN RECOGNITION OF UKRAINIAN INDEPENDENCE

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, as Ukraine approaches its first decade of independence, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, there are many accomplishments which the people of Ukraine can be proud.

For over a millennium, the Ukrainian people have successfully preserved and maintained their unique culture, language, religion and identity. Such an achievement stands as an inspiration for free people everywhere, and is a testimony to the depth, character and vibrancy of the Ukrainian culture.

The November 14, 1999, re-election of Leonid Kuchma as Ukraine's President is a cause for great optimism. High turnout in this election, and a refusal by the voters to return to a Communist past, speaks to the vibrancy of Ukrainian democracy.

With this election, the Ukrainian people chose to move forward with a program of economic reform. While the transition from a centralized economy to a free-market system has not been easy, Ukraine has been blessed with vast natural resources, a sizeable industrial infrastructure and a hard-working and resourceful people that promise to ensure Ukraine's economic transformation. The decision, this year, by the Supreme Rada to privatize large parts of the Ukrainian economy will further enable this industrious nation to continue with its economic progress.

Ukraine's unique geographical location has given it a vital role in ensuring the peace and stability of not only the region, but of all Europe. Ukraine has shown its commitment to a secure Europe by providing troops to the peacekeeping effort in Kosovo, and by seeking to enhance its partnership with NATO. By entering into the Status of Forces Agreement with NATO, and hosting NATO military exercises in Odessa, Ukraine has reiterated its commitment to the world's most powerful military alliance.

At this time when we honor Ukraine's independence, it is only fitting that we laud the many advances made by the Ukrainian people in the